ANTONY GROWS UP

Among all the countries of Europe, England possesses the oldest tradition in the education of its elite, which speaks of itself as "society." Although this society is at the moment undergoing a serious crisis, it has still managed to keep the reins of the English people and the Empire in its hands. The answer to the question as to how one becomes a member of society is of interest to those who wish to understand England as well as the problems connected with the forming of a political elite.

In the following we publish a description and analysis of the youth of Antony, Viscount Knebworth, who represents the ideal young Englishman and whose life typifies the path taken by those Englishmen who join the ruling class. The article is based throughout on biographical material published by Lord Lytton, his father.

ANTONY was born in 1903 into one of England's illustrious families, being the son of the Earl of Lytton. He was christened at the Chapel Royal, St. James's, in the presence of his royal godfather, King Edward VII. At the age of seven he attended the coronation of George V in the capacity of page to the Prince of Connaught and bore himself with such dignity that the crowd in the streets cheered him. These few facts give Antony a setting. Moreover, they indicate the kind of road mapped out for him by tradition. Eton or Harrow, Oxford or Cambridge, travel, career—these are some of the milestones along his road. Its guiding principles, never formulated explicitly but strictly conformed to by all concerned with the boy's upbringing, determined everything from the type of playmates and books that found their way into his nursery to the color of his gloves.

At the age of nine Antony entered West Downs, the preparatory school his parents had chosen for him. The change from home to school did not mean a particularly violent wrench for him, and he found it easy to adjust himself to boarding-school life. He possessed two essential faculties which make for a happy time at a school like West Downs: he was naturally sociable and played all games well.

With the outbreak of the Great War, the boys were organized into scout patrols, and route marches and scouting exercises largely took the place of the more conventional games. War-time conditions thus introduced the boys a few years sooner to the military discipline and training they normally became acquainted with on joining the Officers' Training Corps. Scouting and the OTC both had for their aim the development of the faculty of leadership in the sons of the ruling class of Britain. At West Downs, the scouting was pursued with great vigor, and his father remarked, obviously not displeased, that "as usual when anything became too serious Antony . . . failed to do himself justice . . . . When he was playing for pleasure, he was always at his best."

ETON

When at the end of three years Antony left West Downs, the next step was obvious. His father was an Old Etonian, so Antony was sent to Eton.

Eton stood firm as a rock, a compact, secure world in itself, as it had stood for many generations of Etonians. For Antony, Eton provided the ideal playground. His principal pursuits were games and popularity, and he was immensely successful in both. A keen note of elation runs through all his letters from this period. "I seem to be raking in friends and getting to know new people . . . . I am radiantly happy here. I am fag to the Captain of the house . . . ." Antony remarks proudly.

Fagging is a time-honored institution peculiar to the English public school. According to this system, the boys in the lower forms must do such menial services as brushing shoes and running errands for the boys of the upper forms. It has been attacked as producing bullies among the bigger boys and cowards among their defenseless victims. But fagging has weathered all storms. There is no doubt that it is occasionally abused by brutally inclined boys; but this is far outweighed in the minds of its supporters by its great educational value. It teaches small boys obedience and respect for their elders and, above all, at a relatively early age it teaches the bigger boys the fine art of ruling and commanding, making them familiar with the sense of authority, of superiority: invaluable assets in later life when they will be called upon to exercise these faculties in business or politics.

When Antony left West Downs School, his father summed up his development there in the following words: "He lost something of his originality, as all boys do at school, but the pattern to which he conformed was the schoolboy type at its best. He excelled in all games and sports, and brought back eleven medals for running, jumping, swimming, throwing the cricket-ball, etc. . . . His capacity for making

friends was strongly developed and remained with him always."

From which emerges the fact that sociability and love of games are not only natural advantages ensuring popularity at school, but assets which it is one of the paramount duties of the school to foster. Of course, the sociable disposition in a boy needs directing into the proper channels. With Antony, as with the great majority of public-school boys, this was accomplished without difficulty. The nursery he had grown up in and his surroundings at school and at home made it practically impossible for him to come into contact with any but picked individuals of his own set. A boy would have to be very artful indeed to circumvent the constant vigilance exercised by his elders in this respect. Continual contact with only the right kind of boys gradually inculcates the habit of associating on terms of intimacy only with one's equals. This epitomizes one of the chief aims of Eton. Generations of parents of England's ruling class have expected this educational institution to bring up their sons in the same isolation in which they themselves grew up, so that, through habitual isolation from the rest of mankind, each successive generation be imbued with the consciousness of its superiority. In this way, class-consciousness and clannishness are continually being fostered in the small group of British upper society whose strength lies in its isolation and complete dissociation from all other social strata whom it rules.

SPORTS FOR EDUCATION

Antony retained that robust aversion to work so natural in a small boy just starting school, so fortunate for a public-school boy. The boy with a bent for studiousness had a hard time of it, getting sympathy neither from his fellow pupils nor from the masters, who regarded serious application to schoolwork as an unhealthy symptom in the young unless, indeed, the boy managed to be as enthusiastic a sportsman as he was a scholar. The successful sportsman was the idol of all the boys and the favorite of the masters.

At Eton it was not the school reports but the boy's sports record and his record in his house that mattered supremely, because these indicated the development of his faculties of organization, authoritative self-assurance, and leadership. Eton trusted to the innate intelligence of its pupils to collect—spontaneously or assisted by chastisement—all absolutely essential knowledge. Eton's real care was the molding of the boy's character for his eventual role in empire administration. This is where sports come in. Team spirit, aptitude for leadership, love of competition—all these qualities and many more are called forth by sports. Eton allowed sports a free hand in the forming of the boys' characters and looked confidently to the future when the boys would spontaneously transfer the standards and faculties gained on the playing fields of Eton to intellectual and other planes.

In this connection, Antony's attitude toward sports is interesting. He was eager to gain spectacular victories at as slight an expense as possible of that irksome business, sustained training; and his inherent aptitude for athletics enabled him to excel the standard of the good average with relative facility. This also accounts for Antony's failure to achieve any notable success in cricket. Cricket was pursued with traditional fanaticism at Eton. The cricket standard was high in consequence, and it required exceptional ability and application for even a talented boy to have a chance of getting into the First Eleven. At the age of eighteen, Antony himself formulated his attitude toward sports—which incidentally also applied to his attitude toward life in general—as follows: "You can't get colours without trying, and I hate taking games really seriously—it spoils them utterly, in my opinion."

THE OLD SCHOOL TIE

Antony was an Eton boy, and he was supremely happy. That was all that mattered for the present in the eyes of his parents. His victory in the school's light-weight boxing championship, his experiences and successes whenever he went to camp with the OTC: these mattered most to his parents and to Antony himself; these and, above all, Eton's opinion of the boy.

The tutor's letter at the end of his five years there was one to warm the heart of an Old Etonian: "What seems to rule everything else out of order at present is my overwhelming sense of my debt to him in the conduct of the house. He succeeded an excellent Captain and has maintained the high tone and good discipline; but he has done this with a wisdom and a friendliness which have made him exceedingly popular as well as greatly respected." Obviously Eton was proud of its work. In all respects he proved now that he left Eton to conform to all those standards which go to make the ideal Etonian. Antony's own letters toward the close of his stay at Eton bear eloquent testimony to the triumph of Eton methods. Of Eton he writes:

"It is indeed the greatest and most marvelous school in the world. . . . I think it is just the most wonderful thing in the world what Eton means to Etonians. . . and above all, they go out stamped for ever with the stamp of the finest school in the whole wide world." Here we have the real Etonian, flaunting his school tie. There is a ring of supreme satisfaction in these phrases, of conscious superiority, of enthusiastic acknowledgment that Etonians are a set apart and above other people.

THE TYPICAL UNDERGRADUATE

After Eton, Antony had to choose between Oxford or Cambridge. He decided on Oxford for reasons which, to a genuine Etonian at any rate, were beyond discussion: "It is the finer place; the nicer people go there."

Antony found it very hard to settle down in Oxford, where he had been accepted at Magdalen College. At Eton, Antony had enjoyed the greatest popularity: Oxford ignored him. He was just one among hundreds of newcomers, and he was not sufficiently distinguished at games or scholarship to pass at once into the elite of his college. Antony felt lost. He missed his friends from Eton, who were scattered over a number of other colleges. He missed his regular daily games, and this made him moody and discontented. Though no lover of work, he missed the regularity of school hours and found it difficult to keep his mind on the subject during the long morning hours of solitary study. Hence he did not know how to set about work—a difficulty in which he had the full sympathy of his father, who confessed to having wasted two years at Cambridge before he learned how to work. Antony met with such obstacles in the way of adjustment as to demand in baffled desperation: "Are you very anxious for me to get a degree? Do you think it would be a good plan to chuck Oxford?" He was persuaded to stay and, thanks to his sociable disposition, the strangeness of Oxford soon wore off. Responsive to the mysterious gravitational pull of the right set, Antony was presently absorbed by the political and the clever, the society and the athletic crowd.

Although the early dissatisfaction with himself and his surroundings had worn off quickly, the experience, coming as it did at what may be called the skeptical age, started Antony on the warpath against accepted beliefs, conventions, traditions, ethical and moral standards. In his letters to his father—at that time in India as Governor of Bengal—he attacked and demolished everything; he was caustic and abusive and "hated shams." He was tremendously in earnest and alarmingly revolutionary—with his tongue in his cheek all the while. The fact was that he was enjoying himself hugely in his role of a rebel. This also drove him to follow the tendencies of his set and indulge in those mild excesses which tickle the palate of adolescent vanity with a pleasurable consciousness of recklessness. He drank till he was "blind" or "blotto"; he gambled and played roulette clandestinely; he visited cabarets; he took a transparent satisfaction in having paraded the streets of Paris after a night's dissipation in evening clothes at 10.45 a.m.—"It does one such a lot of good to sow wild oats," he wrote.

But he was merely following the ancient rule of "When in Rome. . . ." As long it was good form in Oxford undergraduate society to indulge in such excesses, Antony pursued the popular forms of dissipation. When entering grown-up society where, he observed, they were not good form, he dropped his little vices as lightly as he had taken them up, for they had never taken a real hold of him. How could they have, since he had made it a principle not to take anything seriously?

WHAT PRICE AMBITION?

While at Eton, Antony had pleasantly vacillated between dreams of a diplomatic career leading him to dizzy heights of fame and power and, on the other hand, of the accumulation of wealth in business in order to be able to live in the country in the traditional grand manner. Now his aims were vaguer. The conventional and commonplace he detested: "I hate the thought of Parliament, or of the City, or of London, or of anything, except something quite peculiar." He trifled with the idea of working his way around the world with a fiver, of digging for gold in Alaska, of writing a book, or of idling away years of bliss on a South Sea island. "You see, I don't care about the big things. I ought to prefer sitting here reading Mill's *Pol. Econ.* & saying to myself 'Read this & one day you may be Prime Minister of England', but I don't. I'd rather go to London and dance," and demanded rebelliously: "Why should I go into the city when I leave Oxford, if I'd rather go and ski? Why should I work if I'd rather do something else?"

The fact that no real ambition crystallized in Antony was due to his inability to feel any but a temporary enthusiasm for any one thing. "I don't really care as I should about my work, I don't care about boxing or really anything. . . . It is a mental attitude which I have rather cultivated, having disliked people who cared, as I thought, too much about everything. Now I can't get out of it." This is how Antony defined his attitude toward life at twenty-one.

But let us not be deceived by Antony's complaints. It is only the wail of one still a little ill at ease in a stiff collar which he would one day learn to appreciate. What he now complained of as a liability would one day prove to be one of the most valuable assets a young Englishman predestined to play a leading role in politics can lay claim to. For this faculty of not caring too much about anything, of maintaining a casual attitude, unprejudiced by strong personal convictions, he was indebted to the public-school system. It had been carefully nurtured at Eton and then at Oxford with such success that now he could no longer get out of it, just as little as he could get out of his set.

VIEWS OF THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Moreover, Antony was impressionable rather

than critical. He had a knack of unconsciously adopting the views and attitude of any person or of any book or play he happened to admire at the moment. In forming opinions Antony let himself be guided by those of persons he respected instead of by his own convictions.

The reader might take this to be a symptom of weakness. Yet neither Eton nor Oxford, neither Antony's parents nor Antony himself, took the trouble to eradicate it. After all, what could be more honorable than for a young man spontaneously to follow the precepts and guidance of his elders with their superior wisdom and experience? What could be safer? What better assurance was there for a smooth career? The talent for adopting the opinions of persons he respected, i.e., the members of the wealthy and prominent set which counts, is as much an asset as the faculty of taking nothing seriously. To have no personal convictions, to support the convictions, political and otherwise, that are in good taste, that rule the Empire—therein lies safety. Eton, Oxford, the people who count, are suspicious of passionate enthusiasm and burning convictions; extremes breed rebels, revolutionaries, and idealists, elements dangerous to the established order. They are in bad taste. Those few rebels who still emerge as rebels from the public-school mill are booked as regrettable failures; they never get anywhere.

FATHER'S ADVICE

It was no doubt owing to his recognition of this valuable faculty for adopting the view of the right people in Antony that prevented any uneasiness from arising in his father's mind concerning his moods and inconsistencies. As for Antony's future, there was absolutely no reason to worry. Quite aside from the reputation Oxford and Cambridge enjoy as seats of learning, one must not overlook their function of being the training ground for the future leaders in Britain's finance, big business, and politics. This is what his father wrote him:

> If you are thinking of business, there are several big business men who are already interested in you. . . . My advice to you would be to spend a year abroad and indulge your tastes for travel. See as much of the world as you can, which will help you to decide in what direction your tastes lie, and then if you have no other strong inclination, I should advise you to take up politics and stand for Parliament. It is the fashion to despise politics, but if you treat them seriously they afford, not only the most interesting life, but the best avenue into all the highest posts in public life. The successful politician who reaches Cabinet rank nowadays can obtain the best posts in almost any profession. Ambassadors, Governors, Directors of Business Companies, are all chosen from this class. The only disadvantage is that it is an expensive profession in the early years and the rewards do not come till late in life.

These few sentences reveal the road to political and financial prominence in Britain, a road which only members of the wealthy, influential, and aristocratic set can hope to negotiate provided, as was done with Antony, they start in earliest infancy. Pedigree leaps the initial hurdle, admission to one of the two or three principal public schools. A favorable report from such a school, combined with an illustrious name and sufficient funds, smooths the way to Oxford or Cambridge. A "first" from one of these universities opens avenues to profitable leading posts in big business. But the helm of the ship of state is put in the hands only of those who, over and above these assets, possess considerable fortune and property. Thus by a strict process of sifting which begins in the nursery, it is ensured that the highest posts go only to the old school tie and the best and wealthiest families. Wealth and nobility rule, and finance has a decisive voice in high politics. It is not by accident that politics as a profession are expensive in England. It is the last and most formidable hurdle raised against would-be intruders who do not belong to the right set.

UBIQUITOUS SOCIETY

Antony's vacations took him to Knebworth House, to the country seats of his friends, to London for the season, to Scotland for the grouse, to Paris for amusement, to Mürren in Switzerland where he spent a fortnight's skiing every winter. It was at this period that his most outstanding athletic achievement took place, the winning of the Roberts of Kandahar Ski Cup. His holidays were always brimful of social and athletic activities. At home and abroad, these took place among a crowd of Old Etonians, of Varsity men, and of people belonging to his set. There was no escaping them: whether he went to Scotland or Switzerland, to London or Paris. He met new people in new surroundings, but it was always Eton in a new setting.

The process of isolating Antony from all but his set was complete. Once, during his Eton years, Antony had rebelled against this rigorous process. Now that he was broken to harness the world opened before him. Slight as was his contact with people outside his set, it sufficed to make him suspect that he was totally ignorant of mankind as a whole, of the world as it really is. The vast majority of even his own countrymen were total strangers to him, and equally so to his friends. It perplexed him, no doubt, to discover that, in its total isolation and carefully preserved ignorance, his set should be called upon eventually to play leading roles in Empire administration. In the hands of men like himself lay the shaping of the destiny of the nation, that is, of people and social classes about whose mentality, desires, aims, joys, and sufferings they had not the faintest idea.

At the age of twenty-two and after taking his degree, Antony set out on his travels, looking forward ardently to the new values, to

the deeper understanding he expected from his visit to distant lands. He joined his father, who was then Governor of Bengal.

INDIA

The first few days in Bombay were spent in showing Antony some favorite walks and rides and introducing him to friends. Life consisted of tennis, riding, cocktails, roller skating—a round of social activities interrupted by a fortnight's pleasure jaunt into northern Sikkim. After two months during which Antony was fully occupied with the usual routine of the Calcutta season, he visited Agra and Delhi. Then the whole family went to Jainti in northern Bengal, and Antony triumphantly shot his first tiger.

Antony's remarks about India are interesting for the light they shed on the educational principles of the English public school as he himself, an Etonian, understood them. India, Antony summed up concisely,

> is Eton. Play, sport, games, are the thing; work the odious duty, the side-show! . . . . That is why the soldiers show up in India & one loves them. They are men physically, & that was all one cared for at Eton. The criterion there was the much-criticised criterion of games, and people who couldn't show up in that aspect were tiresome . . . . The clever ones hadn't got enough spunk to be loved at Eton. . . . The only thing there was manliness as embodied in games. In a way India is the same. The thing there is the men. Somehow intellectual, clever people, with ideas & thoughts & hobbies and interesting minds, didn't fit. . . . Then Europe is like Oxford. A world of books and people & art & literature & learning & clever talk & humbug & genius. . . . I long like hell for Oxford, but I fear home means work, and so I will stay here for always.

Antony professed that India had taken a great hold on him, though it is not clear just why. He had set out with the intention of getting down to the bedrock facts of life, yet throughout his stay in India there is no evidence of his having taken the trouble to do so. Even if he had, it is unlikely that he would have succeeded. The ceaseless round of social activities and the circle of friends surrounding him effectively prevented any serious excursions into the masses of India's humanity. Antony had simply "fallen in love with this God-forsaken country" and declared firmly that he didn't want to go home—till the rains came. Antony found the mist and cold of Darjeeling very depressing. This reconciled him to going home with his father. The magic of India cannot, after all, have been very powerful, to judge by his last letter from India: "I am even looking forward to England and London again!. . . . Just think of London! What's it like? Who's what? What's what? What's the rage? What's happening? Who's lovely? Who's sensational?!!!"

HOW TO BECOME AN M.P.

While he was still satisfying his curiosity on all these points, the problem of his career was seriously tackled. Antony recognized the need for making money but had no taste for the kind of life money-making seemed to necessitate. Through his social connections he was offered an opening with a firm of stockbrokers in the City, which he accepted. After a few months Antony abandoned the stockbroking for work in the Education Department of the Central Conservative Office, a training ground for young men who require experience in political organization. One of his activities there was to travel about the country and visit the universities with the object of interesting the rising generation in Conservative politics, possibly by means of his engaging personality, for Antony's political ideas could at best be called vague.

Antony was now twenty-five years old and, in spite of his avowed lack of interest in politics, his father suggested that he might now stand for Parliament. After his work at the Conservative Office terminated, Antony was invited to contest the borough of Shoreditch. There is no hint of the reasons which occasioned this invitation. Antony did not possess any visible qualifications for such a candidacy, and one is left to infer that to a young viscount who has been to Eton and Oxford such openings are offered as a matter of course.

Antony was formally adopted as the Conservative candidate, and for six months he devoted himself to Shoreditch. But although he was very popular with all classes, he made little impression on their political opinions, despite the long talks with them in public houses, in their clubs and homes; Shoreditch was a Labor stronghold, and the election resulted in the return of the Labor candidate, the sitting member. Nevertheless, after the results of the poll had been declared, it was Antony, the young viscount, and not the winning candidate, who was carried out of the Town Hall on the shoulders of those who had voted against him.

After an extended round of visits in Wales and Scotland, Antony started work on a new enterprise which gave him a substantial income and introduced him to the world of business while leaving him free to indulge his tastes in literature and politics. Lord Ebury, the Chairman of the Army and Navy Stores in London, offered him a seat on the board of that company, as he wished to have a young man at his side whom he could train in the business and who would eventually qualify for executive duties. Again we ask, what qualifications did Antony possess that he should be offered a seat on the board of so large a company? His achievements amounted to an Oxford "second" in history, a row of cups and other athletic distinctions on the mantlepiece, and his Shoreditch failure. Yet Lord Ebury, who was no fool, made this offer. Being a prominent figure in the business world, he was

naturally acquainted with Lord Lytton and his government connections; what was more natural than to strengthen the ties of acquaintance by giving Antony a seat on the board? Antony gratefully accepted the offer and now felt that with a settled occupation and an assured income he was really in a position to enter Parliament.

Not long after, the member for North Herts announced his intention of retiring at the next election, and the Conservative Association set about the selection of a new candidate. Antony's family felt very confident that he would be selected, since this was the home constituency of the Lyttons and they had many friends on the local committee. Clearly, all that mattered in their eyes was family and connections with the right people in the right places. This holds good in general, and Antony would undoubtedly have been selected if there had not been a few ex-Ministers and experienced Members of Parliament who had been unseated at the previous election and to one of whom the seat was offered.

This, however, was only a temporary check, and Antony's big chance came two years later when he was adopted as the Conservative candidate for Hitchin. His family at last had the satisfaction of working for Antony's return to Parliament as the member of his home constituency. This time there was no hitch: in the General Election the Government secured an overwhelming majority, and Antony was returned for Hitchin as a National Conservative.

Antony found himself in a House of Commons largely composed of young men, many of whom, like himself, were there for the first time. The conditions were such as to make it easy enough for a newcomer to be completely submerged, a fate from which Antony was saved by the Undersecretary of the War Office, Duff Cooper, who made him his Parliamentary Private Secretary. This gave him a definite status in the House.

Thus at the age of twenty-eight Antony, totally inexperienced and more or less indifferent about politics, was safely launched on a political career.

THE RIGHT CONNECTIONS

In politics as in all other things Antony found it exceedingly hard to make up his mind. Lacking political convictions of his own, he again had recourse to the old and tried method of adopting the opinions and standards of people who counted. As he himself had put it during his Oxford days: "Daddy is a free trader and free trade sounds so wonderful. I have never really understood it, but I have always felt on the side of free trade." For the rest, he cultivated a flippant manner of expression: "The talk outside Parliament is that the end of everything is at hand. The talk inside Parliament that everything is roses in the garden also continues. I don't know about anything at all, and I don't care about anything at all."

By the time he was thirty, Antony was a Conservative MP whose prospects were brilliant. He had established valuable connections with a large number of influential personalities and with numerous business, financial, and administrative organizations. He was a protégé of Duff Cooper, a director and Vice-Chairman of the Army and Navy Stores, Chairman of the Boys' Camp Organization, representative of the Baldock Conservative Association in Parliament, Commander of a Division of the Metropolitan Special Constabulary Reserve, and about to be made commander of a squadron of the Auxiliary Air Force. Flying promptly became the absorbing passion of his life. "Flying," Antony declared, "is my only recreation. It is fun. Having got into Parliament, I am bored with politics, and now that business is difficult and demands much attention, I am bored with business! That's me."

Here fate intervened: Antony was killed in an airplane accident.

Bulletproof

Field Marshal Blücher of Waterloo fame was annoyed by a man trying to sell him a bulletproof vest. Interrupting his flow of sales talk, he said:

"Let's see your invention. Is it really bulletproof?"

"Upon my honor, Your Excellency!"

"Fine, we'll try it out. Put the thing on!"

"What, *me*?"

"Of course, you. Who invented the vest, you or I?"

After the man, shaking with fear, had put on his invention, Blücher called for a pistol. But when he raised the weapon to test the armor, the inventor had already disappeared through the door.

"Listen," roared Blücher after him, "what you have invented isn't a bulletproof vest: it's a vanishing outfit!"

Communiqué

Columbia Broadcasting System's John Daly reported a communiqué describing the bitter fighting with the Germans during the day: "We captured five living rooms and three dining rooms and have an advance patrol in a kitchen."